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ABSTRACT

This working document suggests guidelines and strategies for the development of education in Africa during the 1990s. The first chapter, "Educational Development in Africa during the 1980s," identifies the following: the main educational challenges in the early 1980s and the responses proposed by the Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States; educational realities in the social and economic crisis of the 1980s; and an evaluation of the implementation of the ministers' recommendations. The second chapter, "New Needs and Appropriate Strategies for the 1990s," covers four topics: developing goals and strategies for the 1990s; education as the key to human development; catering to basic learning needs; and African strategies in respect of education for all. The third chapter, "The Role of International Cooperation," contains three parts: cooperation for the development of education in Africa; guidelines and priorities for educational cooperation in Africa for the 1990s; and setting up appropriate mechanisms for cooperation in educational development. Four references and an appendix giving a breakdown of countries by enrollment rate in 1988 are included.) (NLA)

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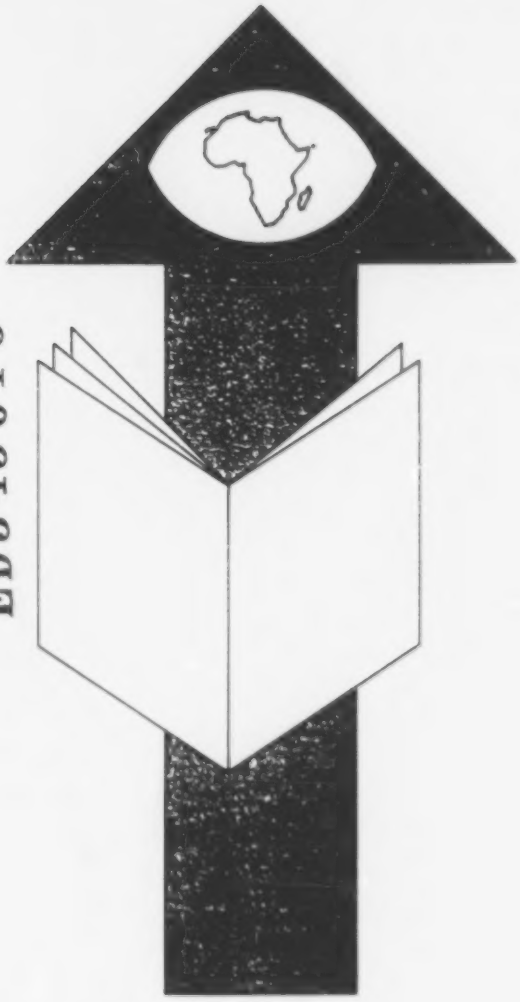

Sixth Conference

of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States

Organized by UNESCO
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Dakar,
8-11 July 1991

Educational Strategies for the 1990s in Africa: promotion of literacy teaching and basic education for development

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SIXTH CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND THOSE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING IN AFRICAN MEMBER STATES

Dakar, 8-11 July 1991

EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE 1990s IN AFRICA: PROMOTION OF LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

ED-91/CONF.211/COL.7

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INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUES AT STAKE

1. After some 30 years' efforts devoted to nation-building and development, the vast majority of African policy-makers are being hard-pressed by their peoples to tell them what they propose to do about all the conditions shaping their future. Education is the overriding leitmotif behind many of the searching questions being asked, and the education system is very often a hotbed of opposition and resistance to the establishment and, in some instances, of violent disturbances, as though these were somehow intended to bear out the contention that it is necessary to 'educate or perish'.[1] It is probably in these terms that the young people of Africa view the problem of conquering the twenty-first century. However, they need an educational strategy suited to that journey into the unknown. This is one of the most important issues being put to the sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States.

2. This working document, which comprises three chapters, is intended to elicit ideas on guidelines and strategies for the development of education in Africa during the 1990s.

3. The first chapter sets out to identify the main trends in educational development in Africa over the past decade. It starts by recalling the major challenges perceived at the onset of the period under review, as they related to the democratization of education and its economic and socio-cultural relevance. These issues prompted the fifth Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States (Harare, 1982) to come up with a set of responses which are directly in line with the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 as far as the enhancement of human resources is concerned.

4. However, the facts of the educational situation changed and suffered the consequences of the climate of social and economic crisis which grew steadily worse. The successes and constraints recorded in implementing the recommendations adopted by the previous conference (MINEDAF V) have to be assessed in the light of those developments.

5. The second chapter, viewed in terms of the whole range of expressed educational needs, raises the issues of strategies. These have to be integrated into comprehensive approaches. In fact, new objectives and new strategies for emerging from the crisis are being evolved continent-wide, in order to cater for people-centred development. The topical issue of human advancement gives rise to the concept of human resources development - an area where education generally, and basic education in particular, have a key role to play.

6. The World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, which were respectively adopted and agreed on by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, March 1990), have to be given tangible shape in African educational policies and achievements. In order to fulfil the continent's educational development objectives, it is necessary to evolve a wide range of strategies taking account of specific subregional and national features.

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1. J. Ki-Zerbo, Educate or Perish, Côte d'Ivoire/Dakar, UNICEF/UNESCO, 1990.

7. The third chapter discusses the role of international co-operation. The Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States is, by its nature, an intergovernmental conference on educational policy and co-operation in Africa. It accordingly affords a prime opportunity for reviewing inter-African co-operation in education, notably since MINEDAF V.

8. African unity and collective autonomy are a mandatory requirement and a deliberate and purposeful approach has to be adopted in progressively giving substance to them in all areas. For the 1990s, it is important to lay down guidelines and priorities in respect of co-operation for educational development. Since literacy and basic education are endogenous and specific, it has to be asked what scope they offer for co-operation among the countries of the region and for international co-operation.

9. In the bid to strengthen educational co-operation, special attention has to be devoted to the mechanisms underpinning it. In this regard, a critical review will be made of the machinery for following up ministerial conferences, with the aim of putting forward proposals for improving it.

10. With its structure as adopted, the working document will cover the following substantive points of the conference agenda:

Item 8 - Evaluation of educational development in Africa during the 1980s and implementation of the recommendations of MINEDAF V;

Item 9 - Priorities for social and economic development in Africa in the 1990s, having regard in particular to the promotion of literacy and basic education;

Item 10 - Co-operation in educational development in Africa: guidelines and priorities for subregional, regional and international co-operation, with special attention to the follow-up to the ministerial conferences and to the existing advisory committees in the field of education in Africa.

11. The discussions on the main working document will be further supported by the information contained in the reference documents, which include:

Development of Education in Africa: A Statistical Review, prepared by UNESCO (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.1);

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Recommendations of MINEDAF V (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.2);

Priorités du Développement Economique et Social pour les années 90, prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.3);

Coopération Inter-Africain pour le Développement de l'Education, prepared by the Organization of African Unity (ED-91/MINEDAF/REF.4).

CHAPTER I: EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA DURING THE 1980s

12. In Africa over the period from 1960 to 1980, the literacy rate rose from 9 to 34 per cent, while school enrolment rates increased from 32 to 60 per cent for the 6 to 11-year age-group, from 17 to 42 per cent for the 12 to 17-year group, and from 2 to 9 per cent for the 18 to 23-year group. This exceptional growth is in itself fraught with challenges.

1. THE EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1980s AND THE RESPONSES PROPOSED BY MINEDAF V

13. In 1980, the school enrolment rate of the 6 to 11-year age-group stood at 75 per cent or upwards in one third of the countries of the continent, while it was lower than or equal to 25 per cent in seven other countries. These extremes are themselves a clear pointer to the problems that are liable to arise. The problems vary and may be more acute in some countries than others, but they can all be identified with such factors as the lack of educational facilities; the imbalances in their distribution throughout the country and between urban and rural areas; the scarcity of physical and financial resources; an environment in which illiteracy is rife; unequal opportunities for educational success; declining standards; the loss of motivation among teachers, pupils and students alike; the failure to strike a proper balance between the curricula taught and social, cultural and economic needs; and the excess number of graduates produced compared with the absorption capacity of the labour market. In short, the problems involved can be placed in two main categories: those bound up with the democratization of education and those pertaining to its relevance. In point of fact, many of these problems are inherent in any developing education or training system, but they become challenges on account of the overall climate of economic crisis.

1.1 The challenge of democratization

14. In the first place, the democratization of education implies that there should be equality of access to education, facilities for which are expected to extend to all sectors of the population. Secondly, it implies that there should be equality of the chances of success in education, with 'emphasis on a diversification of educational offerings so that each individual can have complete self-fulfilment'.[1] Rather than attempting to be exhaustive, this section will confine itself to illustrating some of the facets of the challenge.

15. Firstly, the population in Africa has been growing at an explosive pace and increased by 2.9 per cent a year between 1970 and 1980, as against 1.9 per cent for the world as a whole. The bulk of the population is young, with one person out of every three in sub-Saharan Africa being of school age.[2] These

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1. Regional Meeting of Heads of Educational Planning and Administrative Services in Africa, Dakar, 1979, Educational Change in Africa (Progress Made and Difficulties Met in the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Lagos Conference - MINEDAF 1976), paragraph 21, Dakar, UNESCO, 1979. (BREDA-79/MINEDAF-Fu/3.)
2. World Bank, Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion, Washington D.C., World Bank, 1988. (A World Bank Policy Study.)

figures, which were unlikely to change in the short and medium term, meant that considerable efforts would have to be made to maintain the school-enrolement growth rate, which stood at an average of 8.9 per cent a year in sub-Saharan Africa between 1970 and 1980. It could be readily predicted from the economic environment at the end of the 1970s that education budgets would come under strain.

16. Another facet of the challenge lies in the fact that it is impossible for some countries to introduce universal elementary education by the year 2000. For reasons connected with their population growth and economies, it was virtually certain that the 16 African countries with an elementary school enrolment rate of less than 50 per cent in 1980 would not be able to bring about universal elementary schooling by the year 2000. To do so, in view of the conditions under which their education systems operate, it would be necessary for them to devote almost all their national budget to the education sector alone.

17. A third illustration of the challenge represented by the democratization of education can be seen in the way in which literacy training for women has lagged behind. In 1980, the male illiteracy rate was 54 per cent, as against 79 per cent for that of women.

18. In short, it was with due regard for the significant progress made towards the democratization of education up to 1980 that the MINEDAF V participants looked forward to the year 2000 by recommending: 'the elimination of illiteracy in Africa before the end of the century, by a co-ordinated effort directed towards the universal provision and renovation of primary education, coupled with literacy work among adults'.[1]

1.2 The challenge of relevance

19. Education and training systems are constantly endeavouring to ensure that they are more relevant to their purpose, but this represents a serious challenge in cases where a country does not have a controlled system of collective self-perpetuation, to the extent that classroom education 'looks like a foreign cyst in the social body, a malignant tumour'.[2] To what extent can this challenge in Africa be said to have been more serious in 1980 than previously? The answer is that, as the fundamentally unreformed education systems inherited from the past have continued to spread, they have also magnified the defects and shortcomings which they displayed right from the outset. The use of national languages in teaching, the spread of science and technology teaching, and the relationship between education and the world of work are all areas where the problems of relevance are highlighted by the gap between theory and reality.

20. It may be asked whether those countries, which, in 1980, were still not able to use national languages as languages of instruction or as subjects in their formal education systems, were not faced with an irreversible technical and political stalemate. In that connection, it is possible to gauge all the impact, in terms of the challenge that has to be taken up, of the MINEDAF V recommendation that 'African Member States determined to develop their national languages adopt coherent linguistic policies clearly defining the

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1. Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States, Harare, 1982, Final Report, Recommendation 2, p. 27, Paris, UNESCO, 1982. (ED/MD/69.)
2. Ki-Zerbo, op. cit., p. 14.

status of such languages and how they are to be used in teaching and other fields, especially for the dissemination of science and technology'.[1]

21. It is not by chance that this recommendation establishes a link between national languages, and science and technology. While the traditional knowledge of ancient Africa is gradually fading into oblivion, modern knowledge is being watered-down in too general an education and comes to naught in the surrounding climate of illiteracy, thereby depriving African societies of the powerful leverage afforded by science and technology that is essential to the development process. The task of promoting a policy of national mobilization for science and technology confers special responsibilities on education systems. These entail, for instance, the introduction of integrated science and technology teaching on a massive scale in primary education; the application of diversified curricula comprising elementary technical and vocational training in upper secondary education; the training of supervisory personnel in higher education; and the dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge, and the spread of extension activities for that purpose in non-formal education.[2] These are the guidelines laid down by MINEDAF V, guidelines as relevant as they are difficult to implement.

22. A third illustration of the problems of relevance in education can be seen in the relationship existing between education and the world of work and, more broadly, in the difference separating the education sector from the productive sectors of the economy. The seeds of this problem were already contained in all African education systems, in that they were designed for a mercantile-type of society and economy which has still not been altogether transformed. This accounts for the fact that the modern sector absorbs only a very small minority of the population in terms of labour and is the subject of extremely keen competition among school-leavers. While an ever-growing number of young people with school leaving certificates come to know the bitter experience of unemployment, whole areas of the national economy vegetate in a state of scientific and technology backwardness. As a result, the stimulating give-and-take relationship that ought to exist between the economy and education is undermined by the ruinous failure to adapt.

23. The problem of youth employment is the clearly visible part of a much greater problem of economic and social goals, a problem which goes beyond the scope of education although it cannot evade its share of responsibility. This is reflected in MINEDAF Recommendation 6, which advocates that steps be taken 'to strengthen the relationship between education, training and the world of work, include productive work in the educational process at all educational levels and also in non-formal education, taking the pupils' ages into account; introduce into curricula a grounding in the basic principles of social production, reflecting national realities and characteristics; for this purpose, have recourse to all who have the requisite knowledge and expertise; and revise accordingly the pre- and in-service training of teachers, and prepare teaching materials making it possible to derive the maximum educational value from productive work'.

24. By way of conclusion to this section, it will be noted that the progress achieved by the African countries over a period of two decades gave grounds for some degree of optimism at the beginning of the 1980s, notwithstanding the gloomy signs already visible in the social and economic environment. The following section reports on what happened between 1980 and 1990.

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1. Conference of Ministers ..., op. cit, Recommendation 4, p. 27.
2. Ibid., Recommendation 5, pp. 29-30.

2. EDUCATIONAL REALITIES IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF THE 1980s

25. 'The nineteen-eighties: a lost decade for Africa' is the harsh judgement passed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in its 1990 report.[1] It goes on to say that the 1980s were marked by general economic and social recession. Over that period, Africa went from one social and economic crisis to another. Between 1980 and 1989, in annual terms, per capita income fell by 1.7 per cent, gross fixed-capital formation by 1.9 per cent, the volume of imports by 3 per cent and the prices fetched by primary commodities by 3.1 per cent, while open or disguised unemployment rose fourfold compared with the 1970s. In addition, many other social and economic indicators continued to decline. The volume of indebtedness almost doubled, rising to US $256.9 billion between 1982 and 1989, equivalent to 328.4 per cent of exports of goods and services. Similarly, in the 1980s the number of least developed African countries rose from 17 to 28.

26. The overall situation as summarized above has affected education. Its development, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, can be seen to be stagnating or regressing.

2.1 Overview of quantitative trends[2]

Progress in literacy

27. All in all, the trends in respect of literacy are positive. From 1980 to 1990, the illiteracy rate was reduced from 66 to 52 per cent. A reduction of the same magnitude can be seen from the figures by sexes, with the rate falling from 54 to 40 per cent among men and from 79 to 63 per cent among women. However, it is still disquieting to find that 26 countries of the region have an illiteracy rate of 50 per cent and upwards, with extremes of 81.8 per cent and 19.8 per cent. Another source of concern lies in the objective discrimination to which women are subjected.

Primary education: growth inhibited by the crisis

28. The total number of students enrolled continued to grow and amounted (in millions) to 28.8, 59.1 and 70.4 respectively in 1970, 1980 and 1988. This gives an average annual growth rate of 7.4 per cent between 1970 and 1980 and of 2.5 per cent between 1980 and 1988. The latter rate is lower than the population growth rate for the African continent and partly accounts for the decline in the gross school-enrolment rate in sub-Saharan Africa, which fell from 77 per cent in 1980 to 72 per cent in 1988. During the period under review, out of 44 countries for which data are available, 18 improved their results compared with 1980 in a range extending from 1 to 30 points, but 17 other countries recorded a fall of between 1 and 65 points, while the situation remained unchanged in nine countries.

Secondary education

29. In terms of the growth of enrolments, the numbers increased more quickly than in all the other regions of the world between 1980 and 1988, representing 8.1 per cent in relative terms and 8 million students in absolute terms. Above all, general secondary education took the lead over other types of secondary

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1. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Report on Africa, 1990, Preface, Addis Ababa, ECA, 1990 (E/ECA/CM.16/3.)
2. UNESCO/UNICEF, BREDA-STAT. Regional Bulletin of Education Statistics (Special Issue: Towards Education for All in Africa: Starting-Point).

education. General education accounted for 87.7 per cent of all enrolments against only 7 per cent for technical education and 5.3 per cent for teacher training.

30. The enrolment of girls marked time over the period, and the percentage they represented in the total numbers was, at 35 per cent, identical from 1980 to 1986 and even fell back from 35 to 32 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

31. The rate of growth in the number of teachers was roughly the same as that in the number of pupils, amounting to 8.4 per cent compared with 8.1 per cent, but the variance was more pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, where the figures stood at 7.1 and 8.6 per cent respectively. Women accounted for 29 per cent of all teaching staff in 1986.

Higher education

32. The annual average rate of growth in student numbers for the period from 1980 to 1986 was 6.9 per cent for the continent as a whole and 8.1 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa. This was one of the highest rates in the world. In absolute terms, in 1986 the Africa region had a total of 2,059 million students, representing an increase of 683,000 over six years. There were accordingly 139 students per 1,000 inhabitants, compared with 104 in 1980.

33. A comparison of the trends for the number of boy and girl student enrolments in higher education shows that the level of participation of girls is low, with the average percentage for girls having increased by only one point, from 27 to 28 per cent. The number of teachers can be seen to have grown at a slightly higher rate than the number of students in sub-Saharan Africa, the corresponding rates being 8.3 per cent for teachers and 8.1 per cent for students.

Public expenditure on education and the problem of its distribution

34. Over the 1980 to 1988 period, the percentage of gross national product (GNP) going to education in Africa rose from 5.2 to 6.3 per cent. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, it fell back from 4.9 to 4.5 per cent. The gravity of the situation can primarily be seen from the fact that, between 1980 and 1986, per capita expenditure on education fell from US $33 to US $15 for sub-Saharan Africa and from US $42 to US $36 for the continent as a whole.

35. The cutback in resources is one problem, but their distribution by levels of education and types of expenditure is another, and this provides a useful pointer to the actual priorities.

36. According to the latest estimates available over the period 1980-1988, out of a total of 40 countries, the share of the national budget devoted to pre-primary and primary education amounted to 50 per cent and upwards in twelve. The percentages varied between 40 and 49 per cent in ten, between 30 and 39 per cent in 13, and between 20 and 29 per cent in five. It stood at less than 20 per cent in only one country.

37. In spite of this evident priority given to elementary education, it can be seen that there were 11 cases in the same period where the percentage of the budget allocated to secondary education was higher than that for elementary education. Similarly, in six cases the share of the budget devoted to higher education was greater than that for secondary education.

38. In terms of the distribution of resources by type of expenditure, the situation in Africa was not greatly different from that of the developing countries as a whole. By about 1987, 69.7 per cent of all expenditure on education in sub-Saharan Africa went on salaries, 2.2 per cent on teaching materials and the remainder on administration, social services and sundry other items.

2.2 Overview of qualitative trends

Reforms in the pipeline

39. The twofold concern to ensure that education is of relevance both to society and to the needs of the individual has given rise to three seminal ideas that are a constant feature of educational policies in Africa. These are the integration of education into the life of the community, the link between school and the world of work, and the strengthening of African cultural identity.[1] The practical application of these three ideas demands no less than a fundamental reform of the education systems.

40. As a result, considerable work has been devoted to revising curricula in order to adapt them to their environment. In more recent times, those aspects concerned with improving the quality of life, especially population education and environmental education, have been given special attention. The widespread introduction of science and technology teaching is also another area on which efforts have been concentrated, with the aim of providing African children with the means of contributing to the social and economic changes taking place in the societies in which they live.

41. The school-life or education-work dialectic has been illustrated by the variety of steps taken to extend education to rural areas and to integrate productive activities in teaching. However, the broad problem of the link between school and the world of work still exists, inasmuch as the key to solving it is not exclusively educational. The same is true of the strengthening of cultural identity, which cannot, for example, thrive merely on experiments in using national languages in teaching, for example, where setbacks have, in fact, been recorded in some instances.

42. As was already noted at the Harare Conference, in several cases educational reforms have not been far-reaching or systematic enough. The initial burst of enthusiasm progressively palled in the face of the harsh realities which the reforms entailed in terms of political mobilization, and technical and financial capability. Although in several countries the reforms were not dropped outright, they continued to exist only in the form of broad-based projects. Under such circumstances, what quality of education is being offered?

School efficiency on the decline

43. One indirect approach to the problems of the quality of education lies in examining the internal and external returns generated by an education system. For instance, in 1987 the average percentage of primary pupils repeating a class stood at 20 per cent in Africa as a whole and was more than 30 per cent in ten countries out of 44. In the same period, the survival rate for the last primary year was 77 per cent. When this type of observation is carried out for

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1. Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States, Harare, 1982, Education and Endogenous Development in Africa: Trends - Problems - Prospects, Paris, UNESCO, 1982 (ED-82/MINEDAF/3.)

the other educational levels, it can point to situations where inefficiency is flagrant. For example, in 1990 it was found in one of the region's universities that, under the working conditions observed, more than 20 years' study would be needed to produce graduates from a first-degree course theoretically lasting four years.

44. It may well be asked, therefore, what such degrees represent in terms of the sum of knowledge acquired. Studies and systematic evaluations of the quality of education are lacking throughout the region. Very limited one-off studies such as those carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) show that the level of studies in Africa in such subjects as languages, science and mathematics is low by international standards.[1] This reference to standards is bound to raise the issues of equality of opportunity and fair treatment in education. This is something which is not enjoyed by most children in the developing countries, where the teaching and learning conditions are found wanting.

Decline in teaching and learning conditions

45. Among the factors influencing school achievement, the critical points relate to teaching staff, teaching materials, and premises and facilities.

46. Educational policy-makers in Africa have to resolve the difficult problem of providing a sufficient number of qualified and motivated teachers. The bulk of education budgets goes on expenditure on staff. In cases where the percentage spent for this purpose amounts to as much as 70 per cent, as in several of the Sahelian countries, where the primary-school enrolment rate is still close on 30 per cent, there is very little scope for recruiting new teachers in order to maintain and step up the growth rate of education.

47. All too often, individual teachers are recruited under the pressure of circumstances and the question of their initial training is conveniently overlooked. It is not easy to make up for this shortfall in skills and qualifications when on-the-job training systems are very precarious. Young teachers who have entered the profession in this way, often for want of any other job opportunity, are not very motivated: the same applies to their seniors who find their earnings declining. Indeed, in the 1980s, the actual salaries of teachers in many countries fell by some 30 per cent in real terms. This reduction in salary was compounded in a number of cases by the failure to ensure regular payment, which in turn compelled teachers to engage in other activities in order to earn a livelihood. The prestige attached to the teaching profession is now a thing of the past.

48. Teaching materials, especially textbooks, are of crucial importance to the quality of learning. Unfortunately, this sector, which was already severely underfunded, has not been spared by the cutbacks in expenditure on education recorded since 1980. The seriousness of the situation is only starting to be revealed. For instance, in 1986, ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa spent an average of US $2.49 a year on teaching materials for every primary-school pupil. Parents now obviously have to contribute increasing amounts, for without teaching materials, teaching becomes a merely oral exercise and learning an exercise in committing things to memory. However, governments are progressively introducing policies aimed at making teaching materials available at a cost which people can afford.

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1. F. Caillods and T.N. Postlethwaite, Teaching and Learning Conditions in Developing Countries, in F. Caillods (ed.), The Prospects for Educational Planning: A Workshop Organized by IIEP on the Occasion of its XXVth Anniversary, pp. 134-173, Paris, UNESCO/IIEP, 1989.

49. The crisis in education, in terms of its failure to adapt to the economic context and to the social and cultural environment, is reflected in school infrastructure and facilities. These represent a significant proportion of the assets which each country owns in the form of buildings and equipment, but they suffer from serious management and maintenance problems. The availability and quality of premises for teaching purposes vary with the educational level, the urban or rural areas involved and the development levels attained. They give rise to problems of fair treatment and affect the quality of the teaching provided.

50. To take the one example of primary education, it can be seen from the data available for the 1980s that the growth in the number of schools took one of three trends, in that the number levelled out, declined, or increased. All of these developments take on different meanings if a comparison is made with the growth in school attendance. For instance, the levelling-out of the increase to roughly 2 per cent, as in the case of Togo and Mauritius, and the decline from 12.8 to 1.9 per cent in Zimbabwe, can be accounted for by the high level of school attendance already achieved. By contrast, a decline in countries with a low school attendance rate results, among other things, in overcrowding in the existing schools. In point of fact, in 1987 the number of pupils per teacher was 42.2 in 47 countries of the region, but was more than 60 in five countries. The situation is plain to see in suburban areas, where classes of as many as 100 pupils may be reported. No school architecture, whatever its type, can cope with such overcrowding, which often means that there are not enough desks, toilet facilities or other amenities.

3. EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF MINEDAF V

51. The scope of MINEDAF V can already be partly gauged from the foregoing overview of quantitative and qualitative developments against the backdrop of the economic recession of the 1980s. In May 1985, a regional technical follow-up meeting, preceded by a questionnaire-based survey among the Member States, provided the first opportunity of taking stock of the situation. In 1990-1991, an evaluation was undertaken of the action carried out by UNESCO in pursuance of the MINEDAF V recommendations. These two activities are the source of information and assessments, which are summarized under the following five headings bringing together most of the 18 recommendations adopted by MINEDAF V:

(i) educational development policies, planning and administration;

(ii) the eradication of illiteracy through the development of primary education and the promotion of literacy among young people and adults;

(iii) the improved teaching of science and technology;

(iv) the development of higher education; and

(v) other aspects of educational development:

early childhood education;
the use of national languages in teaching;
education and the world of work; and
educational research.

52. The important point relating to co-operation for educational development will form the subject of Chapter III of this document.

3.1 Educational policies, planning and administration

53. Pursuant to Recommendation 1, 'development of education: policy and planning', the action of the Member States and UNESCO's contribution have been focused on laying down objectives for educational development policies and on strengthening planning services and mechanisms, in particular through training activities.

54. In the Member States, the 1980s bear witness to the critical reviews of educational policies which were undertaken. The following events may be noted by way of example: 1981, Senegal: the Etats généraux of Education and Training; 1982, Niger: the major nationwide debate on education; 1983, Gabon: the Etats généraux of Education; 1987, Gambia: the National Conference on Education; 1988, Sierra Leone: the National Conference on Education; and 1988, Kenya: the presidential working party on education and manpower training for the next decade and beyond.

55. In 1987, UNESCO, as its contribution, published a document on education and training policies in sub-Saharan Africa. By examining the priorities collectively identified at MINEDAF V, this document was expected to show how those priorities were still relevant, especially in view of the long-term development outlook for the region and in spite of the climate of severe economic and financial constraint. This came right at the time when there was a direct or indirect shift in educational policies as a result of the adoption of structural adjustment programmes.

56. All the countries of the region have educational planning units and have engaged in efforts to strengthen those units by taking account of the imperative need to decentralize educational action. In support of those efforts, UNESCO, with the financial assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), embarked on the setting-up of a network for Regional Technical Co-operation for Training and Research in Educational Planning and Administration (COFORPA), which has been joined by 32 Member States.

57. Various projects have been carried out under this arrangement. For example, between 1986 and 1990, two projects funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) made it possible to train 313 and 34 trainers in educational planning and administration for ten English-speaking countries and the five Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa respectively. Inpractical terms, the multiplier effect of these two projects has resulted in the training of 2,370 people in all the countries concerned.

58. Over the period 1982-1990, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) had a total intake of 187 African trainees in its annual training programme.

3.2 Eradication of illiteracy

59. The Harare Declaration advocated for the period 1980-2000 that the African States eliminate illiteracy through a vigorous, sustained two-pronged campaign to universalize primary schooling for children and to promote literacy among young people and adults.

60. The overall patterns in respect of illiteracy and elementary schooling over the past decade have been outlined above, and they do not give grounds for optimism.

61. However, the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa, which UNESCO launched in 1984 in support of the efforts of the Member States, is not lacking either in relevance or in tangible achievements in the six priority areas chosen. In point of fact:

(i) in an endeavour to foster the development and application of strategies, 25 Member States have benefited from a set of activities aimed at strengthening national capabilities for drawing up and implementing integrated plans for eradicating illiteracy;

(ii) in the action-oriented research field, nearly 50 studies aimed at gaining a clearer picture of illiteracy have been undertaken in the countries of the region;

(iii) between 1984 and 1989, almost 4,300 people participated in the staff training provided through some 260 seminars and workshops;

(iv) one area on which efforts were concentrated was that involving the production and dissemination of literacy and post-literacy training materials;

(v) with regard to exchanges and information, nearly 100 study trips were organized, while the newsletter Alpha 2000 is being published in English, French and Portuguese;

(vi) actions to alert and mobilize public opinion undertaken by the Member States are supported by UNESCO, which is also contributing to the implementation of operational projects.

3.3 Improved teaching of science and technology

62. Recommendation 5 invited the Member States to promote a policy of national mobilization for the development and introduction of up-to-date science and technology curricula appropriate to the formal and non-formal education of young people and adults. UNESCO was expected to contribute to the attainment of these objectives by lending its support to African Member States 'in setting up a regional consultative committee to devise and formulate a programme for the renewal of science and technology teaching in Africa and advise the UNESCO Director-General on ways and means of making an effective contribution to such renewal by a subregional approach'.

63. The Member States have attached increasing priority to an integrated approach to science and technology teaching, since such an approach gives expression to the fundamental unity of scientific thought and precludes undue or premature insistence on separation of the different scientific disciplines. The experience gained by the Member States offers numerous examples of the steps taken to introduce science subjects at all educational levels without exception. Hence, a state-of-the-art subject, such as information technology finds a wide range of applications as a subject in itself, as a teaching aid and as a management tool.

64. The policy for renewing science and technology teaching is backed by efforts to produce teaching materials, which have now gone beyond the pilot-project stage and have come into semi-industrial production, as is the cases in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

65. In order to ensure that science and technology become firmly rooted in the day-to-day pursuits of the population, extension work has been undertaken and non-formal programmes, if necessary using national languages, have been set up for young people and adults.

66. In 1984, UNESCO set up the Advisory Committee on the Renewal of Science and Technology Teaching in Africa, which held its first meeting at the Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA) from 4 to 6 December 1984 and has since held four other meetings, in 1985, 1986, 1989 and 1990.

67. In line with the suggestions made by the committee, UNESCO has engaged in activities aimed at improving the training standards of teachers, producing teaching materials and making the population more familiar with scientific knowledge and the link between education and the world of work. From 1985 to 1989, for example, some ten national workshops made it possible to train 488 people. At the subregional and regional levels, there were about 20 workshops, seminars and consultations, attended by a total of 487 people.

3.4 Development of higher education

68. As already noted above, higher education in Africa is continuing to grow, but is having to contend with all kinds of difficulties. The most significant of these relate to inadequate study and research facilities, the shortage of high-level teachers, the unsuitability of curricula, internal inefficiency and the lack of job outlets for graduates. These are all reasons which make the qualitative strengthening of higher education a highly topical issue. This was, in fact, the purpose of MINEDAF V Recommendations 7, 8 and 9. UNESCO was specifically requested to 'carry out a special programme on the future of higher education in Africa, with a view to raising the standards of instruction, promoting the collective use of trained personnel and potential and co-ordinating the higher education policies of African Member States'.

69. One of the results produced by the Regional Advisory Committee, created in 1987, was the development of that special programme which was designed as a set of activities to be organized in the form either of projects or of a sequential series, to be implemented through a mechanism for regional co-operation. The three priority strategic areas identified are pedagogical and scientific training of teachers, pedagogical and scientific documentation, and the pooled use of the resources available in universities.

70. The special programme would be expected to take a subregional approach. For this purpose, it would have to contribute to the setting-up of five programme-based networks, consisting of two in West Africa (in the Sahelian and forest areas), one in Central Africa, one in East Africa and one in Southern Africa. Each programme-based network would be supported by a centre of excellence where the resources needed for the network's operation would be brought together under a suitable arrangement.

71. Although the special programme has not yet secured the extra-budgetary funding hoped for, UNESCO has continued to lend its support to important activities aimed at improving higher education. Noteworthy instances of these include the pedagogical training of higher-education teaching staff (Abidjan workshop, 1985); the introduction of information technology in management methods (Banjul, 1985); and management training for key administrators of higher educational institutions (Dakar, 1990; Harare, 1991). Arrangements for setting up an inter-university co-operative training network for higher educational personnel were finalized at Franceville, Gabon, in December 1990.

3.5 Other aspects of educational development

72. There are a number of other areas which, while not having priority, represent important aspects from the standpoint of the endogenous development highlighted by the Harare Conference. These are early childhood education, the use of national languages in teaching, the links between education and the world of work, and educational research. The promotion of all these areas is

contributing to enhancing the priority objectives by steering them towards ensuring greater equality of opportunity in the case of early childhood education and towards making education more relevant with regard to the other aspects.

73. UNESCO has collaborated with the Member States in developing a variety of activities, including training workshops, case-studies, the publication of guides and bibliographies, the preparation of teaching materials and the implementation of pilot projects. All in all, however, the 1980s were not notable for any significant breakthroughs in the areas concerned.

74. When the Conference comes to discuss the development of education in Africa in the 1980s, it may wish to seek answers to the following questions:

What are the educational challenges with which the African States will have to contend in the 1990s?

Are the downward trends in the quantitative and qualitative development of education structural or cyclical?

What lessons can be drawn by the Member States and UNESCO alike from the implementation of the MINEDAF V recommendations?

CHAPTER II: NEW NEEDS AND APPROPRIATE STRATEGIES FOR THE 1990s

75. As the 1980s came to an end, it had to be acknowledged that Africa was facing a grave crisis in all sectors. Absolute poverty is spreading and, by 1985, almost half the population was affected.[1] In a world economic order in which the gap between the rich and poor is growing steadily deeper, the factors responsible for the exclusion of people from the mainstream are becoming more acute, and this is one of the greatest threats to the security and peace of individuals and societies. This situation, for which responsibility has to be shared, is causing questions to be asked about the very principles underlying development. And yet progress has to be meaningful. 'The need for progress is writ large in the awesome economic and social realities of our time, as it is in the hearts of men. The idea of progress implies having faith in humankind and its future ...'[2]

76. It is with people as the yardstick that the development goals and strategies of the 1990s will have to be evolved, in order both to ward off the effects of the crisis and to attack its roots in a long-term effort. What contribution will African educational strategies make to resolving these all-encompassing issues?

1. DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE 1990s IN AFRICA

77. Provided lessons have been learnt from all the mistakes made in the past, the proper attitude in these times fraught with uncertainty would be to start by really listening to what people have to say, rather than thinking or deciding for them without allowing them to speak for themselves.

78. For the moment, as far as the overall thrust of economic and social development is concerned, 'Africa remains a contested terrain between the policies agreed upon by African governments collectively and the set of prescriptions emanating from international financial institutions and an increasing number of donor countries at the national level'.[3] So far, none of them appear to have been effective in contending with the African economic crisis. This sense of realism can plainly be seen in the most recent strategy proposals for the 1990s and beyond. These are the long-term future-oriented study From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, published by the World Bank in 1989, and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP),[4] put forward by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and adopted by Resolution 44/24 of the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. In addition to these two documents, there are also the prospects set out in 1990 by UNDP in its World Development Report. All three are a source of ideas on goals and strategies which point to the same end or cover additional ground.

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1. United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1990, New York/Oxford, UNDP/Oxford University Press, 1990.
2. Pauvreté, Progrès et Développement, Paris, UNESCO/L'Harmattan, 1990, p. 27. (French only)
3. UNESCO, Education and Training Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa: Problems, Guidelines and Prospects, p. 44, Paris, UNESCO, 1987. (ED-87/WS/44.)
4. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), Addis Ababa, ECA, 1989. (E/ECA/CM.15/6/Rev.3.)

1.1 Objectives

79. Following the path mapped out by the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), AAF-SAP highlights three lines of thrust for development in Africa:

people-centred development, through alleviation of poverty and improvement of the well-being of the population;

the establishment of a self-sustaining process of economic growth; and

the integration of the African economies through the achievement of collective self-reliance, both nationally and regionally.

80. These goals cannot be fulfilled without far-reaching changes in all areas, including the political sphere, where democratization would enable all sections of the population to play their full part.

1.2 Strategies

81. In terms of the strategies adopted for emerging from the crisis, Africa has had its taste of structural adjustment programmes. ECA notes that, 'between 1980 and 1988, 33 African countries had concluded Stand-by Arrangement Facility and 12 had Extended Fund Facility from the IIMF (International Monetary Fund), and 15 had Structural Adjustment Loans from the World Bank. In spite of all these measures, the crisis remained unabated'.[1] But had those measures not been taken, the situation would have been still worse. However, given the theoretical ideas underlying these programmes, which lay stress on the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and exports, improvement of the balance of payments, a balanced budget, debt servicing and so on, it may be asked who stands to benefit from them, when the very basis of African society is being undermined more and more as a result of the increasingly dire poverty in which children, women and old people are living. In short, structural adjustment programmes do not cater for the development goals of Africa as outlined above. There is a pressing need for adjustment in contending with the economic and social crisis in Africa, but it has to be an adjustment accompanied by far-reaching structural changes which have to be brought about within the long-term perspective of self-sustaining development.

82. This is virtually the same language as that used by the World Bank in its strategy proposals, when it states: 'It was soon appreciated that, to bring about real and enduring development, a transformation of the production structures was required and, furthermore, that the capacity of people and institutions to deal with change must be enhanced. This means strengthening institutions and investing in people'.[2]

2. EDUCATION AS THE KEY TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Human development

83. The human resources concept, which lays stress on people as production factors, ties in with a broader connotation according to which people are both the objects and the agents of development. This is reflected in the approach currently being taken to human development. 'Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development, the three essential ones

1. ECA, op. cit., paragraphs 52-53.
2. World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth: A Long-Term Perspective Study, Washington, D.C., World Bank, 1989, p. 38.

are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living ... Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights ...'.[1]

84. In the three key elements - longevity, knowledge and standard of living - which go to measure human development, it can be seen at once that pride of place is occupied by the role played by education, since it is likely to enhance the other two aspects.

2.2 The key role of education and of basic education in particular

85. Arguments in defence of this claim, ranging from its justification on moral grounds to very practical, utilitarian considerations, can be obtained from aa rapid review of the existing literature:[2]

Education is a human right and a necessary condition for the full exercise of other rights.

Education, especially for mothers, contributes to improving family nutrition and health, reducing mortality, increasing life expectancy and spacing births.

Education, especially primary education, has a high personal and social rate of return (27 and 49 per cent) and can increase the productivity of farmers by as much as 8 to 10 per cent.

Through the acquisition of basic skills, such as reading, writing, calculation and problem-solving ability, education can enhance adaptability with a view to improving the quality of life, protecting the environment and affording some command over technology. But the overriding factor is the ability to keep on learning.

3. CATERING FOR BASIC LEARNING NEEDS

86. The question is whether all the arguments advanced above in justification of the prime role played by education in the development process are sufficient to prompt decision-makers to give education the priority to which it is entitled. Situations where countries have jobless graduates and provide universal elementary education, without having really taken off from the underdevelopment stage, are embarrassing facts of life which can be observed in Africa and which cause some measure of scepticism about the priority attached to education. If progress is to be made, both ideas and action have to be rethought. This is the message conveyed at the outset to this decade by International Literacy Year 1990 and the World Conference on Education for all (Jomtien, 1990).

87. Although the Jomtien Conference was not an altogether new departure, it was one of those challenging ventures which set out to reach a worldwide consensus not only on principles but on activities which need to be undertaken to achieve clearly defined aims.

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1. United Nations Development Programme, op. cit.
2. J. Hallak, Investing in the Future: Setting Educational Priorities in the Developing World, Paris/Oxford, UNESCO/IIEP Pergamon Press, 1990.

3.1 World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs

88. Against a background formed by an objective analysis of such daunting world problems as the threat of economic stagnation and decline, the widening gap between rich nations and poor, and the widespread environmental degradation, the Declaration stresses education's ability to contribute to solving them and, having regard to mankind's existing capacity for progress, voices in the Preamble the Conference's conviction that, for the first time in history, basic education for all is an attainable goal.

89. The ten articles of the declaration spelling out the purpose, nature and conditions for achieving basic education for all are encapsulated in Article 2, which it would not be superfluous to quote in full:

> Article 2. Shaping the vision
>
> 1. To serve the basic learning needs of all requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an 'expanded vision' that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices. New possibilities exist today which result from the convergence of the increase in information and the unprecedented capacity to communicate. We must seize them with creativity and a determination for increased effectiveness.
>
> 2. As elaborated in Articles 3-7, the expanded vision encompasses:
>
> . universalizing access and promoting equity;
> . focussing on learning;
> . broadening the means and scope of basic education;
> . enhancing the environment for learning;
> . strengthening partnerships.
>
> 3. The realization of an enormous potential for human progress and empowerment is contingent upon whether people can be enabled to acquire the education and the start needed to tap into the ever-expanding pool of relevant knowledge and the new means for sharing this knowledge.[1]

90. There are three features of the declaration which appear to be particularly innovative, no doubt because they echo the shortcomings of educational development in years past. These are, firstly, the stress laid on learning acquisition, in other words the acquisition of knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and values; secondly, the broadening of the scope of basic education in terms both of its child, adolescent and adult targets and of its evolving content; and, thirdly, the across-the-board strengthening of partnerships for educational development, which is seen as being the responsibility of everybody, without exception, at all levels of organized society, the international level included.

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1. World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, 1990, World Declaration on Education for All (adopted by the Conference on 9 March 1990), p. 4, New York, Inter-Agency Commission for the World Conference on Education for All, 1990.

3.2 Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs

91. From the operational standpoint, the declaration is accompanied by a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, which is expected to be used at the national, regional and international levels for systematizing action geared to specific targets stemming from the following overall goals:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children.

2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as 'basic') by the year 2000.

3. Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g. 80 per cent of 14 year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement.

4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age-group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates.

5. Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity.

6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change.[1]

92. The step-by-step sequence of activities entailed in achieving education for all consists in identifying needs, setting targets, choosing a strategy compatible with the resources capable of being mobilized, engaging in practical implementation through specific programmes and projects, and conducting periodic evaluations, with the whole exercise being enhanced by the mandatory interaction of many sectors in each country.

93. The purpose of the regional and international approach is to support and strengthen action within each country and thereby bring solidarity into play.

4. AFRICAN STRATEGIES IN RESPECT OF EDUCATION FOR ALL

94. This section does not purport to present Member States with new development strategies for their education and training systems. It takes it

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1. World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, 1990, Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs (endorsed by the Conference on 9 March 1990), paragraph 8, New York, Inter-Agency Commission for the World Conference on Education for All, 1990.

for granted that they subscribe to the conclusions adopted at MINEDAF V, especially with regard to the imperative need to eradicate illiteracy in Africa, promote science and technology teaching, and strengthen the role of higher education in the service of African societies. Due account is also taken of the impact in the region of the World Bank's Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion.[1] Lastly, there has been the recent consensus on the World Declaration on Education for All.

95. Rather than go over the same ground as the Jomtien Conference, MINEDAF VI should move forward and turn the guidelines laid down at Jomtien into proposals for tangible action geared to African situations. The main concern will be to find ways and means of halting and reversing the negative trends that can be seen in the quantitative and qualitative growth of education. In addition, education will be expected, to a greater degree than in the past, to contribute to the structural transformations that are bound to occur, by itself embarking on transformations.

96. The undertaking is not an easy one, for there is no shortage of inhibiting factors. One notable factor is population growth and its corollary, rapid urban development. Another by no means negligible factor lies in cutbacks in funds so substantial that they jeopardize the gains already made. Similarly, the inertia of education systems should not be underestimated: their structures, contents and management methods are set in so hard and fast a mould and are so largely under the control of those who profit by them that any attempt to change them triggers off a backlash. In all these respects, the time factor is extremely important. It is an ambivalent factor, in that it sets education and its effects in the long-term perspective but, in doing so, it may easily relegate them to the back of the queue and condemn them to obsolescence at a time like the present, when the speed at which the dominant factors are changing is a prime feature

97. The approach to educational strategies at the regional level comes up against some formidable pitfalls. The problem is one of managing to avoid both undue generalization with which nobody can identify and narrow focusing on country situations in a succession of position papers. Moreover, merely dealing with the development of the different levels and forms of education one after another is somehow tantamount to refusing to engage in the debate on strategies, which require choices to be made. Since the Conference is called upon to discuss literacy and basic education in particular, there are good grounds for introducing the debate on strategies from that angle, with the help of a simple typology.

98. The table presented in annex splits the countries of the continent into three groups, according to their net primary-education enrolment rates in 1988. The corresponding figures are less than 50 per cent for Group A (16 countries), from 50 to 70 per cent for Group B (13 countries), and more than 70 per cent for Group C (17 countries). This table accordingly shows the following indicators: the net primary enrolment rate in 1988 and the gross primary enrolment rate; the gross enrolment rate for all educational levels; and the illiteracy rate for 1980 and 1988. It also shows, depending on whether data are available, the per capita GNP and the percentage of both GNP and public expenditure allocated to education. All these items are very straightforward compared with the complexity of the individual country situations.

1. World Bank, Education in Sub-Saharan Africa ..., op. cit.

99. In point of fact, many more variables than these are involved in laying down a strategy and they are not confined to the quantifiable aspects alone. The table only shows the situation at the outset, without prejudging future developments, and there is no question of suggesting that there might be a strategy that would be uniformly valid for a whole set of countries.

100. A number of strategic lines of thrust can be said to emerge spontaneously from the current levels reached by the different countries and from an examination of the policies which they have announced or adopted. Educational development strategies can be set out in three phases covering the whole range of objectives which any national education or training system have to fulfil but starting with basic education, which has to be subject to expansion, universalization or consolidation, depending on the case.

101. The following considerations, which are centred on the theme of the Conference, accordingly touch briefly on the need for establishing an interrelationship between the other levels and forms of education.

4.1 First-phase strategies: expansion

102. Group A includes both the largest African country, Sudan, and a small country, Burundi. Guinea and Liberia are not exposed to the problems of drought and desertification which strike the Sahelian region and cause natural disasters from time to time. Other factors giving rise to specific educational problems include the size of the population (46.7 million people in Ethiopia), its low density (two inhabitants per sq. km. in Mauritania), or its rapid growth (3.5 per cent in the United Republic of Tanzania). Five countries in the group are, or have been, affected by war, with all the consequences this has had on development.

103. All the countries in the group are in the low income category, with a per capita GNP ranging between US $150 and 520. There are significant variations in the proportion of resources allocated to education. At one time in the period under review, the share of GNP allocated to education in nine countries ranged from 3.7 to 7.7 per cent, while five countries set aside from 22.9 to 33.2 per cent of their national budgets for the purpose. The lowest figures recorded were 1.9 per cent in respect of GNP and 9.1 per cent of the national budget.

104. The wide variety displayed by the data shows that the educational situation cannot be explained in uniform terms. Between 1980 and 1988, for example, there was an increase in the gross elementary enrolment rate in eight countries, but that rate fell in seven other countries. The gross enrolment rate, which can to some extent be said to be a pointer to the absorption capacity of the systems, is distinctly less favourable in the first seven countries shown in the table. The illiteracy rate, which ranges from 50 to 81.8 per cent, is very high.

105. Taking all the foregoing factors into consideration, it is clear that the educational policies of the countries concerned cannot develop along identical lines. However, the very high illiteracy rate among young people and adults and the low school-enrolment rate among children are signs that the population as a whole in all these countries is less well prepared to participate in the development process. Accordingly, the expansion of primary education and the promotion of adult literacy could come at the top of the priorities for the Group A countries.

106. The question then arises of how this can be brought about when national policy-makers in the Ministries of Education, Finance and Planning have to contend with a limited volume of resources, demands emanating from all sectors of national life and the growth requirements of the other educational levels.

There are almost never any strikes calling for more literacy and primary education, whereas they are a common occurrence in secondary schools and universities, where they are often bound up with more wide-ranging social protest. Indeed, this is at the very root of global strategy problems, in response to which the solutions adopted are often only of a one-time nature. What are the alternatives when it comes to choosing an expansion strategy?

A. Non-formal education: a choice for the bulk of the population

107. The issue is a particularly serious one in the countries of this group. The fact is that the bulk of the population does not have access to formal education systems but it cannot be completely left to one side. Considerations not only of equity but of the economic survival of the countries themselves warrant adopting priorities which are aimed at ensuring that everybody can acquire, in an efficient manner, the basic enabling skills of reading, writing and calculation, and the ability to solve the problems connected with the activities of learners in agriculture and in all the occupations in the so-called informal sector. The question is whether the countries of this group can achieve a literacy rate of about 50 per cent by the end of the century.

108. In spite of the policies announced, non-formal education programmes have to cope with many difficulties in respect of facilities, organization and guidance. As far as facilities are concerned, the number of personnel is inadequate, teaching materials are in short supply and, as a rule, the volume of financial resources mobilized nationally is small. As a result, the programmes are largely dependent on external funding. From the organizational standpoint, there may be a lack of co-ordination between the different programmes, duplication of effort and an absence of follow-up. When it comes to guidance, the actual sense of motivation of the target population is a problem and reflects lack of mobilization and involvement, and probably the unsuitability of the programmes themselves. All these difficulties are not insurmountable. Indeed, there are many innovative practices with regard to literacy and post-literacy in the region from which all countries could draw benefit.

109. In connection with training for literacy personnel, distance teaching by radio and correspondence courses has been used successfully in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. Training has been provided in Sierra Leone for dual-purpose teachers for both primary schooling and literacy work. Burkina Faso has developed an intensive 47-day training method going by the name of 'literacy commando'.

110. Innovative post-literacy activities in the form of popular theatre performances or rural newspapers have had a significant impact in Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Sierra Leone.

111. One venture recently launched in Senegal, in the form of a literacy caravane, holds out promise for instilling a sense of awareness in the public and for fostering co-operation between the different partners in catering for basic learning needs.

112. Another innovative aspect has involved the implementation of special literacy and post-literacy programmes for specific groups, such as nomads (in Nigeria). Women benefit from specific projects in such countries as Burkina Faso, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zimbabwe.

113. The relevance and quality of non-formal education programmes call for the utmost attention. In most instances, the idea is to provide a population group with the minimum skills it needs for its day-to-day survival. 'If, then, there

is any such thing as an "educational minimum", the people best placed to determine its substance are those involved in each particular region.' Only thus can appropriate and co-ordinated consideration be given to health education, education for food self-sufficiency, population education, environmental education and other forms of education, within the basic micro-environment.[1] It has been argued that for education to become where it has never been, or become once more where it once used to be, a process of self-education through the autonomous mobilization of social energy, especially within the context of a village or group of villages, an urban neighbourhood or association of neighbourhoods. It is further argued that this assumption of responsibiity must necessarily embrace three indispensable areas: participation in design and decision-making processes; regular, structured involvement in the processes of management and evaluation, and finally financial accountability with regard to both income and contributions.

114. It is in this way that genuine integration can be achieved at the local level. This means interactive multi-sector integration to promote basic education. It offers more chance, among other things, of securing the link or 'osmosis' between the non-formal and formal sectors by starting with contents instead of, as is often the case, beginning and ending with 'containers' by, for example, agreeing on the joint use of classrooms and teaching aids.

115. Whenever the political determination has been made quite clear by the fact that a substantial volume of national resources has been mobilized, and when the population has been mobilized to participate, then it is easier to attract the essential external funding.

B. Primary education: cutting off illiteracy at the source

116. As far as the outlook for educational development for the 1990s is concerned, it is possible to read the following lines from the Country Presentation prepared by Mauritania[2] for the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Paris 1990):

> For literacy, 'here too, the objectives are clear but the constraints are considerable. The government nevertheless hopes to meet the challenge of eradicating illiteracy completely by the end of the 1990s'. In the case of formal education, 'despite the positive results achieved over the past few years, the next decade will have to remedy the poor access to basic schooling (54.7 per cent school attendance) and to technical and vocational training. It will also have to improve teaching conditions and adapt the system to future employment needs ... The budgetary question will be difficult to resolve given the size of the appropriations already allocated to this sector'. This is one statement among many others. Between 1980 and 1988, this country stepped up its net primary-school enrolment rate from 24 to 40 per cent and, in 1985, it allocated 7.9 per cent of its GNP and 33.2 per cent of its national budget to education. This example clearly illustrates the efforts being made but also the scant room for manoeuvre when educational targets have to be set for the future.

117. Primary education is an absolute priority for the Group A countries, and yet the idea is not to universalize the education system as it is operating today. It is considered unrealistic for them to hope to achieve complete schooling and widespread literacy by the ways and means used hitherto. But are there any alternatives?

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1. Ki-Zerbo, op. cit., pp. 81 et seq.
2. Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris 1990, Country Presentation - Mauritania, 1990.

118. Thinking on the subject and the observation of actual practice could be said to offer two approaches that are not mutually exclusive. The first of these would involve generating a maximum return from the existing systems. The second would lie in giving education a fresh lease of life by introducing a new generation of reforms. They both have the same starting-point, in that they set out to ensure equity in education.

119. The introduction of a set of financial and pedagogical measures, in which the former deal with, say, reallocating resources within the system and rationalzing unit costs, and the latter with regulating flows and the different ratios, makes it possible to generate a return from the education system and to increase its ability to meet the demand for primary education. In this connection, educational development simulation exercises are useful for pointing to trends.

120. A synoptic simulation performed for six Sahelian countries - Burkina Faso, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal - gives the following results.[1]

121. If the operating conditions in the education systems of the countries concerned remain unchanged by the year 2000, in four countries they may lead to a decline in the enrolment rates of some 10 per cent compared with the level at which they stood in 1987.

122. In four countries, the introduction of a number of measures aimed at generating a return could enable progress to be made towards a situation where there would be virtually universal school enrolment by the year 2000. In two countries, however, the same measures would scarcely make it possible to go beyond a 50 per cent enrolment rate.

123. This manner of proceeding, for which services are being increasingly made available for the benefit of the Member States, introduces a measure of realism into target-setting and enables a very specific country-by-country approach to be taken to strategies.

124. The above example gives quite a clear illustration of the imperative need for a sustained expansion strategy, from which it is possible to gauge the significance of the suggestion made in the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs that primary schooling should be provided for some 80 per cent of the 6 to 14-year age-group by the end of the decade.

125. The whole package of measures for generating a return on education systems is quite well known and is being partly applied in many countries. However, the simulation exercise cannot explicitly show up the difficulty with which the countries have to contend in giving effect to those measures. The discussion might perhaps focus on educational financing, which is an area going beyond the narrow confines of education, in that it involves decision-makers and a variety of other participants, including people from outside the region. In poor countries, there are objective limits to the reallocation of resources to the funding of private sector education.

126. The other approach to the problems of basic education for all would be to give it a fresh lease of life. Following the first generation of reforms in Africa, whose fate is only too well known, it may be asked whether the time has not come to identify another generation of reforms which, on the one hand, would be designed more systematically by making use of the whole mass of

1. As recorded by J.P. Jarousse and A. Mingat for the Institut de Recherche sur l'Economie et l'Education of the Université de Dijon (IREDU) and the Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) of Dijon.

accumulated experience and the existing research capacity and, on the other, would be implemented more strictly by making the most of modern innovative approaches to planning and management. Last but not least, such reforms would be more readily accepted in a climate of democracy and participation. Further food for thought may be provided in the form of summary quotations from some of the conclusions of Educate or Perish:

'The renovation of the African educational system should be accomplished according to three main phases, which do not necessarily have to follow a fixed chronological sequence. These are Africanization, the Quest for Excellence, and Popularization ... The strategy that can help ensure dignity for individuals and efficiency for the whole system is a unified education system not dominated by any single centre, but in which power is shared by a multiplicity of local centres ...' One positive approach lies in improving returns, pending the transformation of the entire system in the long run. In addition to ensuring that a financial balance is struck in quantitative terms, this also embraces the qualitative and structural aspects of the returns, through such policies as the following:

refraining from excessive specialization by providing for common cores which improve the teacher/student ratio;

introducing a higher proportion of science and technology teaching and instruction in production practices, which should provide part of the funding;

developing teacher-training colleges and teaching institutes for all forms of education, starting with basic education;

optimizing the proportion of teachers at different levels;

increasing the classroom occupation rate by means of the two-shift system or by using the classrooms for four terms in the year instead of three;

decentralizing the school system;

computerizing management.

'Africanization means a perennial endeavour to make African education an inwardly focused self-reliant enterprise underwritten by the community, which monitors it to make sure that the educational system becomes and remains both an aid to life and a reason for living.

To state the issue in more precise terms, basic education, which might aptly be described as the launching pad preparing every African for accomplished citizenship, should cover the following six features:

basic health science;

food and nutrition;

basic technological science;

ecology and environmental science;

reading, writing and arithmetic;

elementary civics (history, geography, institutions and values).'

C. Priorities at the other educational levels

127. In spite of all the priority attached to basic education, there is no prospect of its spreading unless it is really integrated into the overall human resources development policy coming within national development policy. Hence, the priorities assigned to basic education and literacy cannot be dissociated from the strategic options adopted for the other educational levels.

Post-primary education

128. The United Republic of Tanzania considers that it is 'nearly at the lower end of African countries in secondary-school enrolment ratios - only 3 per cent of the age-group get placed in public schools; when the private sector is included, the promotion rate is about 6 per cent. Because of the heavy expenses of public secondary education, the only realistic option for fast expansion in secondary-school places is by maximizing voluntary self-help efforts. However, self-help schools too are having difficulties in maintaining standards because of shortages of materials. The government, therefore, intends to establish a grant-in-aid fund to support community-financed secondary schools. Preference in the allocation of these funds will be given to poorer districts'.[1]

129. The option is plain to see for a country which has long given precedence to literacy and primary education. The development strategy adopted is likewise clearly spelt out.

130. In most instances, the priorities set at the post-primary level, whether they be for general education or for technical education or vocational training, are dictated by pragmatism. One important criterion could be said to be the allowance that has to be made for the economy's skilled personnel needs but, in many cases, the unduly narrow labour market would only allow for an adjustment downwards. Expansion depends much more on fluctuations in demand and on the imperative need to reduce social unrest. However, a third factor - the equity factor - makes it mandatory to ensure that access opportunities, both as between urban and rural areas and between boys and girls, will be equal.

131. When credit allocations in the Group A countries come to be examined, there can be seen to have been extreme situations where, at one time in the 1980s, the share of the education budget earmarked for secondary education in three countries was higher than that for primary education. In 1989, the nine Sahelian countries allocated an average of 33.6 per cent of their education budgets to secondary education, as against 48.7 per cent to primary education, although the numbers involved represented 52 and 10 per cent respectively of the age-groups in question. Between 1980 and 1989, in four countries of the group there were signs of a tendency for secondary-education budgets to grow. If that tendency were to continue, the prospects of fulfilling the targets set for basic education would be reduced.

Higher education

132. Very considerable priority is attached to higher education in Africa, to a much greater degree in qualitative terms than in quantitative terms. The fact is that graduate unemployment and the brain drain are cyclical factors which make stabilization and change a compelling need. The only way out is to boost quality.

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1. Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris 1990, Country Presentation - United Republic of Tanzania, 1990.

133. To an even greater extent than in secondary education, the measures and modalities capable of being applied should seek to reconcile the technical rationale with the political and social rationale, which is very perceptible at that level. The regulation of intakes in order to bring them into line with the absorption capacity of the institutions concerned would be the starting-point for a process geared to enhancing internal efficiency, while enhanced external efficiency would not rule out the freezing of some types of training. Among the steps which need to be taken to restore quality are the provision of an adequate amount of scientific teaching materials, the strengthening of supervisory staff and the further training of teachers.

134. The share of national resources taken up by this educational level is considerable compared with its importance in terms of numbers. African universities have to practise the cost-effectiveness, productivity and efficient management which they are supposed to teach. In spite of efforts to put the situation on a healthier footing, fresh resources are essential for ensuring the successful transformation of higher education for the benefit of African societies. A significant proportion of its new lease of life will come from restoring its research capacities.

4.2 Second-phase strategies: universalization

135. It certainly takes the randomness of figures to bring together in the same group countries that are so scarcely comparable. On the one hand, Group B includes Benin, Rwanda and the Comoros and, on the other, Zaire and Nigeria, while Ghana, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco are also in the same category. By and large, they are located further south, in geographical areas that are less affected by drought. In terms of per capita GNP, they are generally in a more favourable position than the countries of Group A. Two of the countries - Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria - form part of the so-called middle-income countries, while Zaire, with a per capita GNP of US $150, offers enormous potential. Substantial financial efforts have been made in favour of the development of education.

136. In terms of their literacy and elementary schooling levels, the literacy rate of 49.9 per cent and gross enrolment rate of 80 per cent mean that these countries are close to the average for the continent as a whole. However, the net enrolment rates, which range from a low of 50 per cent to a high of 66 per cent, point to the scale of the task remaining to be accomplished. Hence, like the Group A countries, education strategies would stand to gain from giving prominence to basic education and to maintaining and strengthening what has already been achieved.

137. With a few qualifications, the pattern of priorities for the relevant levels should not greatly differ. High priority is attached to promoting literacy among young people and adults: otherwise, the illiteracy rate for the group would most likely be about 39 per cent by the year 2000. The same is true of primary education, which calls for the closest attention. In fact, the climate of crisis makes it difficult to maintain past performances. Out of the 13 countries in the group, eight have seen their gross enrolment rate fall. In heavily populated countries like Zaire and Nigeria, a few points' slippage in the enrolment rate means that millions of children are debarred from schooling. In the case of these two enormous countries, one of the guidelines for developing elementary education would be to set about reducing regional inequalities. In any event, considerable efforts have to be made to enhance the quality of learning.

138. As far as the secondary, vocational and higher educational levels are concerned, the guidelines are aimed at stepping up efficiency and relevance under comprehensive economic and social development policies, in which the obvious potential of many of the countries in the group is awaiting the training of skilled manpower resources in adequate numbers before it can be exploited. These countries would be advised, by adopting an approach appropriate to their case, to aim for the formation and strengthening of the critical mass of managers, technicians, scientists and researchers needed for an endogenous and self-sustaining development process.

4.3 Third-phase strategies: consolidation

139. It has to be asked whether the level of educational development achieved will be upheld and strengthened in time to come, or whether it will be affected by setbacks in economic growth or financial difficulties. This is the question that can be said to be common to those countries of the otherwise very mixed Group C, and especially to the nine which are not petroleum-exporters (Botswana, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Kenya, Mauritius, Swaziland, Togo and Zambia).

140. All the countries of the group have completed universal elementary schooling, or almost. The capacities for this purpose exist, even though a decline in the net enrolment rate has been recorded in some countries. The other formal educational levels have grown to a sizeable extent. When the enrolment rates for the 12 to 17 year age-group are taken into consideration, post-primary education can be seen to be extremely widespread, as in the cases of Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. By contrast, illiteracy among young people and adults is a source of disquiet, with a rate of close on 35 per cent for the group as a whole. Once due allowance is made for that fact, the educational strategies should aim at promoting literacy and at ensuring the qualitative transformation and improvement of learning conditions generally.

141. In the context of the countries in question, policies expressed in terms of the 'eradication of illiteracy' may be much more operational in character than in the Group A and B countries. Benefit should be derived from all forms of non-formal education likely to have a wide-ranging and lasting impact. While the quantitative development of primary education is no longer a priority because it has already been achieved, stress should nevertheless be laid on equalities of opportunity, in respect of which pre-school education could form the subject of a large-scale operation. Even so, the enhancement of quality will still be a source of concern.

142. In the case of the other educational levels, the countries concerned, like those in the other groups, will have difficulty in striking a proper balance. On the one hand, the social demand for education is very high and it has to be met in the least costly way possible. On the other, the education and training sectors must display the ability to adapt quickly if they are to meet the needs of economies that are expected to diversify and become more productive and competitive. There is no hard and fast answer to all these questions within the education system alone.

143. By way of conclusion to this chapter, it may be useful to redirect the thrust of educational strategies in relation to the crisis which was rampant throughout the 1980s in Africa and is structural in origin. In order to emerge from that crisis, a thorough overhaul is imperative in all areas. The requirements of ensuring freedom and democracy in the political sphere, refocusing economic growth objectives on people with a view to their self-fulfilment and creating a climate of genuine social participation all form part of the structural transformations that have to be made in a

long-term effort. Education can and must contribute to that effort. Each country's educational development strategy is bound to cover three aspects: the education needed to survive, the education needed to develop the skills involved in raising living standards and the education needed to foster creativity and inventiveness. The integrated and mutually inter-active nature of these three aspects is such that it imparts a constant drive to the strategies for expanding, universalizing and consolidating the basic education that is essential to any society.

144. When the Conference comes to consider the economic and social development priorities in Africa for the 1990s, especially in the light of the promotion of literacy and basic education, it may wish to discuss the following questions:

How can African education contribute to the success of the essential structural transformations, both economic and social, now taking place in Africa?

How can it be ensured, in the differing contexts, that educational strategies will give priority to literacy and basic education?

CHAPTER III: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

145. Africans have a tendency to look elsewhere for what they could well find at home. In their search for answers from outside the continent, they all too readily overlook the fact that Africa has been greatly influenced by, or else has received or imitated models of education systems which represent too heavy a liability in some respects. Co-operation in education poses the dilemma of choosing between an approach that is bound to be wide-open and the imperative need to be selective and take up a new focal point, especially in the present circumstances, marked as they are by both the limited extent of co-operation between the African countries and the decline in international assistance for education. The message contained in the new outlook for recasting the world order is quite plain: Africa has to be more than ever its own partner.

146. This dilemma subtends the discussion of the issues bound up with what has actually been done in respect of co-operation in education since MINEDAF V and with the new directions which it can take.

1. CO-OPERATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA SINCE MINEDAF V

147. Of the 18 recommendations adopted by MINEDAF V, 9 were specifically concerned with co-operation for the development of education, the strengthening of co-operation between the Member States and the increased role of UNESCO and the international community. The question is that of how words were turned into deeds.

1.1 Co-operation between the Member States

148. It is difficult to assess the extent of the co-operation in education between the Member States under the different existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. In March 1985, for example, BREDA organized a regional technical follow-up meeting to MINEDAF V,[1] preceded by a questionnaire-based survey which was conducted with the aim of gathering direct data from the Member States on action taken in connection with the recommendations at the national level. The response was limited, in that answers were received from only 19 of the 43 States having participated in the Conference. The processing of the answers on this particular point gave somewhat disappointing results. For instance they did not point to active participation in the Network of Educational Innovation for Development in Africa (NEIDA) exchange network or active co-operation with such regional and subregional organizations as the African Curriculum Organization (ACO), the African Bureau of Educational Sciences (BASE), the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) or the Regional Council for Adult Education and Literacy (CREAA), to quote only examples of organizations whose terms of reference cover basic education and literacy.

149. While undue conclusions should not be drawn from this limited survey, it may give some indication as to the level of activity of many regional and subregional organizations. Had these been operating at the optimum, they could have made an invaluable contribution to the promotion of regional co-operation in education, since they cover virtually the entire field of education in Africa.

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1. Regional Technical Follow-up Meeting to MINEDAF V, Dakar, 1985, Main Working Document, Dakar, BREDA, 1985 (BREDA-85/MINEDAF-V-Fu/4.)

150. The same type of comment applies to higher education and research institutions, whether these are national but open to other countries, or first and foremost of an intergovernmental nature. Co-operation is made more conspicuous by the intermixing of students, teachers and researchers, although it would stand to gain by going further and envisaging the creation of 'centres of excellence' in Africa.

151. It has to be asked whether the shortage of funds, language barriers and poor means of transport and communication, all of which have been noted as being among the difficulties faced by co-operation in education, do not hark back to the more fundamental difficulties entailed in moving beyond the national context towards African integration.

1.2 Co-operation between UNESCO and the Member States

152. Pursuent to the recommendations adopted by the Conference on this subject, UNESCO responded in three ways: first by contributing to strengthening regional co-operation; second by increasing its support for national liberation movements and third by furthering the mobilization of funds on behalf of education.

153. UNESCO's action is consistent with the principles underlying technical co-operation between the Member States. It sets out to foster, in the Member States, the definition, implementation and evaluation of education policies and plans, along with concerted action in that area. In addition, the Organization is giving priority to regional and subregional programmes geared to joint activities. Since 1982, for example, the following new regional co-operation programmes and instruments have been created: the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa (1984); the Advisory Committee on the Renewal of Science and Technology in Africa (1984); COFORPA (1984); the Regional Committee for the Application of the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States (1985); and the Advisory Committee on Higher Education in Africa (1987). Under all these programmes, UNESCO is encouraging intellectual and technical exchanges by organizing conferences, seminars and workshops, providing for study and fact-finding tours, and preparing and implementing projects (see paras. 51-74).

154. There is co-operation on a continuing basis between UNESCO and the two main regional organizations - the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECA. Periodic consultations on matters of common interest are held with both those organizations. For example, they work together in preparing the regional conferences of ministers.

155. The regional and subregional organizations maintaining co-operative links with UNESCO are contributing to the implementation of the Organization's programme. This takes the form of joint activities, such as seminars and workshops, and of the support which UNESCO gives to the symposia, meetings and specific projects of such organizations as the Conference of Ministers of Education in French-speaking countries (CONFEMEN), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the African Cultural Institute (ACI) and the Association of African Universities (AAU).

156. Between 1982 and 1989, UNESCO's support for national liberation movements, both under its regular programme and in connection with operational projects supported by UNDP, was instrumental in providing the ANC and SWAPO with a total of 85 university training fellowships and 119 fellowships for primary and secondary teacher training. The education centres of the African National Congress (ANC) and South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) have also benefited from the provision of teaching materials.

157. In the sphere of international co-operation, UNESCO has, in its bid to mobilize funds for the development of education in Africa, continued to co-operate with UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the African Development Bank (ADB) and various countries and organizations contributing to funds-in-trust. For example, from one biennium to another since 1982, some 40 UNDP-funded projects, averaging some US $20 million each, have involved the Member States of Africa. In the case of the ADB, from 1983 to 1989, 46 projects for its African member countries were identified, prepared, appraised and financed with the active support of the UNESCO-ADB Co-operation Programme.

158. However, in marked contrast to the two previous decades, the period from 1980 to 1990 saw a continuous decline in the volume of UNESCO's extra-budgetary operations. In historical terms, UNESCO's systematic involvement in operational activities dates back to the 1960s and was in response to the nation-building needs of the newly independent countries, especially in Africa. The Organization was in the forefront of the development of national education systems and its action had a significant influence, especially within the United Nations family, on the fundamental importance attached to education in the development process. Moreover, at the present time, the main funding agencies, such as the World Bank, UNICEF and UNDP, are developing their own technical and operational capability in this field. Even so, the recent joint initiative undertaken by UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNESCO in organizing the Jomtien Conference represents an important step towards again combining efforts for the development of human resources.

159. Nevertheless, due allowance has to be made for the far-reaching changes having taken place in technical co-operation. The fact is that the countries themselves have developed their own technical capability and are self-reliant in many fields. In addition, they can draw on the variety of experiences available in the different United Nations agencies and other organizations. The tripartite approach to international development co-operation which was a feature of the 1970s is now changing in favour of a programme approach and of implementation by a country's own expertise. Lastly, the context of competitive bidding is affecting the hitherto prime role played by the United Nations Specialized Agencies.

160. Having regard to all these factors, UNESCO is adapting its co-operation with the Member States. Stress is now being laid on activities upstream of operational projects, especially sector-policy analyses and project preparation.

1.3 General features of educational assistance

161. Apart from the decline in the volume of extra-budgetary resources mobilized through UNESCO, the picture has to be rounded off by noting the general features of the assistance for education provided to Africa. The data available for the specific case of sub-Saharan Africa are summarized below.[1]

162. The total volume of assistance to education in the 1980s works out at an average of US $1,555 million a year. A detailed analysis of this substantial volume of assistance points to a number of findings which should give food for thought. For instance, the bulk of bilateral assistance goes on expatriate personnel, while multilateral assistance tends more to be taken up by buildings and equipment. All in all, the de facto priorities for assistance are primary education (7 per cent), secondary education (16 per cent), technical education and vocational training (33 per cent), and higher

1. World Bank, Education in ..., op. cit.

education (34 per cent). In terms of country distribution, small countries receive more than large ones.

163. One conclusion which can be drawn from these findings is that elementary schooling and literacy, which are priority sectors for the countries of the region from the standpoint of basic education, do not attract international assistance. Since recurrent charges and, especially salaries, are critical items in primary-education costs and in the strategies for its universal extension, it is debatable what alternatives international assistance could offer.

2. GUIDELINES AND PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN AFRICA FOR THE 1990s

164. 'Perhaps the most important human development target for the year 2000 is to ensure universal primary school enrolment for boys and girls ... If primary school enrolment is universal by 2000, literacy rates will rise dramatically throughout the developing world in the early part of the next century.'[1]

165. This target, when taken together with the requirements for developing human resources at all levels, is bound up with the whole issue of education in the countries of the region. Could not both co-operation between African countries and international co-operation work towards fulfilling that target within the framework of a regional plan of action?

2.1 Project for a regional plan of action catering for basic learning needs in Africa

166. A regional plan of action must set itself the clear-cut goal of contributing to strengthening each country's ability to achieve the aims bound up with the expansion of early childhood developmental activities; the universalization of primary education; the promotion of literacy; and learning achievement, in the framework of an integrated human resources development policy closely in step with the overall development goals. The main feature of regional action in this connection lies in the economies of scale which it generates and the contribution which it can make to strengthening collective self-reliance and the regional unification process.

167. Among the many areas suited to regional action, there are three which can be singled out from the angle of basic education. They stem from the three related areas of education policy, the quality of education and educational aids. More specifically, they are:

strengthening national capability for drawing up and implementing education plans, programmes and projects;

strengthening the capability for evaluating and improving the quality of education;

encouraging the production and use of effective educational aids, especially teaching materials.

Educational planning, administration and management

168. The Jomtien Conference invited the countries of the region in very concrete terms to make a start, with effect from 1990, on drawing up, adopting and implementing plans of action aimed at bringing about education for all.

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1. United Nations Development Programme, op. cit., p. 68.

Following an initial review in 1995, the requisite adjustments will be made for the period 1995-2000.

169. The priority attached to ensuring that primary education and literacy are given their fair share compared with secondary and higher education, and the imperative need for structural transformation and reform in a situation where resources are scarce, represent a challenge to the approaches adopted by educational planning. Those approaches have to cater for fresh demands for strengthening and renewal at the different conceptual, methodological, institutional and human levels, in line with the recommendations of the international congress on Planning and Management of Educational Development (Mexico City, 1990).[1]

170. In conceptual terms, reference is made to the problems of the complex relationships existing between economic development, human development and educational development which educational planning has to take into account.

171. From the methodological standpoint, the growing uncertainty regarding changes in the socio-economic and political environment associated with structural constraints calls for a 'strategy management' approach connected with the development of long-range scenarios which make it possible to look into the future and set in train processes geared to changing society through education, by encouraging variety in both formal and non-formal educational methods and modalities.

172. At the institutional level, the first type of action involved in the governmental-institution reform process relates to the strengthening or creation of planning capability at the intermediate, local and institutional echelons, which would also include programming tailored to the wide variety of regional and local situations, in a bid to foster decentralization and social participation. The second type of action will entail strengthening information systems, making it possible to develop new indicators, ensure more systematic use of data generally and compile a wider range of qualitative data. Thirdly, education administration and management systems will have to be modernized and extended.

173. With regard to personnel, the actions involved will set out to re-examine, update, strengthen and institutionalize initial and on-the-job training for educational planners, administrators and managers, especially in the broader context of the intersectoral approach suited to the development of human resources. Special importance will be attached to the ways and means by which the training of trainers can generate a multiplier effect, as it will to the links and exchanges between specialists through the existing co-operation networks, which will have to be strengthened.

174. All this range of activities will have to be accompanied by a minimum of field research carried out jointly by the institutions of several countries. From all these points of view, when the task performed worldwide by IIEP is borne in mind, it is easy to appreciate the role which subregional centres, especially if they are given good backing, can play in providing the services required.

175. One immediate way of renewing educational planning, so that it can respond to the challenges facing the development of education for the 1990s, is to enhance the analytical knowledge and know-how of the education and training sector at the national level. This will be essential to governments and external financing sources in developing and managing national policies,

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1. Planning and Management of Educational Development, Mexico City, 1990, Final Report, Paris, UNESCO, 1990.

strategies and action programmes, following up their implementation, and mobilizing and co-ordinating external assistance. UNESCO has specific expertise in sector analysis and this is currently being put to use in a growing number of countries in co-operation with UNDP. This approach has been used successfully in seven countries of the region (Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mauritania and Tunisia).

Quality of education and evaluation

176. The drama of the decline in the quality of teaching is being played out at the micro-level of individual institutions and people. Yet it is a subject of grave concern common to all countries and warrants questions being asked about on the nature of the action that has to be undertaken at the regional level by way of a contribution to possible answers. Might it not be necessary to start at the beginning and set up teaching-quality monitoring units in the region?

177. Indeed, if country comparisons are to be meaningful and if, furthermore, it is wished to correct the inequalities in educational achievement, in other words to 'plan the quality of education', agreement has to be reached on what is meant by quality of education and on how it is to be measured. This calls for a set of interconnected activities comprising the gathering and processing of data, research and training. In short, evaluation visualized as a dynamic process, for use as a tool for constantly improving learning, is something that is not very widespread in the region.

178. Enhanced evaluation capacities make it possible, in the specific contexts of each country, to target the factors conducive to improving the quality of education by avoiding approaches that are liable to lead nowhere. In fact, the still limited studies carried out on this subject have already identified a number of important factors: curricula, teaching materials, the length of schooling, the teaching staff and the learners themselves.[1]

179. However, a great deal still remains to be done to understand learning processes and the ways in which knowledge is acquired. The strengthening of evaluation capability will provide for the expansion of such facilities as teaching institutes and curriculum development centres. In addition, personnel training in this area is particularly important.

180. By actively engaging in this sector, higher education would ensure that it establishes an effective and rewarding link with the other levels and forms of education, such as primary and secondary education, and literacy work.

181. In the area of evaluation, as in many others, the human, physical and financial resource base needed to take meaningful action is beyond the individual capacities of the countries of the region. A subregional approach is accordingly recommended, not so much for its own sake as to strengthen national capacities or foster their creation. The fact is that if concern over the quality of education and the findings of research on evaluation are to be integrated into the educational decision-making process, a satisfactory framework for doing so can once again be found in a sectoral-policy analysis approach at the national level.

Teaching materials

182. The shortage and, indeed, the virtually complete lack of teaching materials are among the main causes of the decline in the quality of teaching

1. M.E. Lockheed and A.M. Verspoor, Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries: A Review of Policy Options, Washington D.C., IBRD/World Bank, 1990.

at all levels. All the countries are faced with the same question of how to set up a school-textbook and teaching-material policy which fosters effective learning achievement. The question is never exclusively educational - and neither is the answer. The design, production, distribution and use of such materials represent particularly strategic areas, where political, economic and cultural concerns are all intertwined. Every country in the region is quite rightly endeavouring to reduce its state of dependence in this respect. However, if the aim of locally manufacturing low-cost school textbooks and teaching materials is to be fulfilled, a combined national and regional strategy, covering both the medium and long term, will be required.

183. At the present time, the situation in the Member States is such that it favours the country approach, with the many constraints that this implies in terms of availability of skilled personnel, limited markets and negotiating power in dealings with foreign partners. A good many of these problems could be solved within the regional framework. There are few examples of co-operation in this area and those that did exist were short-lived, like the regional centre in Cameroon for four countries in Central Africa (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad and Gabon), which lasted from 1964 to 1970. A similar centre, bringing together Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, was set up in 1970 under the Mano River Union. Without a supporting base at the national level, it may be difficult to ensure the success of such ventures in co-operation. It may be hoped that more tangible scope for joint activities will emerge from the current stage, as national school-textbook and teaching-material policies are laid down. Such co-operative activities would make it possible to benefit from economies of scale and ensure some measure of collective self-reliance at the regional level. From this point of view, it might be advisable, as first stage, to contemplate giving support to the efforts of the Member States of the region by setting up subregional centres serving both as data banks on teaching materials and as places where the teaching materials produced in the region could be demonstrated. The member countries of CONFEMEN seem to want to go further in instituting inter-country co-operation in this field by taking the school-textbook production centre in Bouakké, Côte d'Ivoire, as an actual supporting base.

2.2 The role of educational assistance

184. The foregoing sections have identified a number of key areas in which more effective inter-African co-operation than in the past could make an enormous contribution to accomplishing the goals of education for all. A firm commitment by the Member States to a regional action programme on behalf of education for all would at the same time broaden the basis for international co-operation. By taking account of structural adjustment requirements, this could provide support, at both the country and regional levels, for actions aimed at strengthening capacities as well as those having a multiplier effect.

185. The beneficiaries of assistance and those providing it should come to an agreement on a number of ideas and practices that are likely to enhance the effectiveness of the aid which the countries need in order to advance towards the fulfilment of their educational goals. The question is what proposals can be put forward with a view to adopting a new approach.

186. In the first place, a minimum consensus is necessary on the action to be undertaken. In many countries of the region, the real answer to educational problems lies in the adoption of sweeping changes and reforms. The significance and influence of these terms vary, depending on the partners. As a result, the economic, social and political constraints may be underestimated and misunderstandings may arise regarding the ability to implement measures and reforms. Only a genuine transparent dialogue can make it possible to avoid reforms imposed from the outside or reforms that only exist on paper, both of

which have little likelihood of being carried out. One way of arriving at a consensus is to make education a priority within a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to human resources development which is firmly rooted in national economic development. However, time is needed to lay down such policies and the problems cannot wait.

187. Another idea is that the assistance provided for education should form a long-term commitment, which would enable the transformations initiated to take root and become irreversible to some degree. For this purpose, the recipient countries have to be capable of ensuring that most of the goals decided on will be pursued without interruption. In this respect, such assistance can contribute to the creation and strengthening of national institutions.

188. A third source of concern is that of ensuring that the increase in the volume of assistance will be consonant with the goals being pursued. However, since any form of assistance implies dependence, the countries are not warranted in resorting to more assistance before having made rational and optimum use of the domestic resources available. The external-financing problem area covers aspects connected with the absorption capacity of the aid-receiving countries, but it is also important for them to ask themselves about the nature of the expenditure items, such as foreign-exchange and local currency costs, capital investment and recurrent costs, which the external assistance sources are prepared to meet. In the broader context, aid terms are still a topical issue.

189. In conclusion, while it cannot be claimed that the list of proposals is exhausted, one more wide-ranging issue calling for attention is that of the co-ordination and integration of the large number of assistance and co-operation programmes. Answers to this appear to be taking shape in the creation of 'round-table' machinery at several levels, and the Task Force of Donors to Education in Africa was, for example, set up in that area. This brings together donors accounting for some 85 per cent of all assistance to education in Africa, and close on 25 African Ministers of Education take part in it. However, if this machinery were to be confined to the funding agencies alone in a sort of face-to-face dialogue between aid donors and recipients, it has to be asked whether it would not be liable to debar some of those involved in educational co-operation. This question is the first of many others regarding the agencies and mechanisms for educational co-operation in Africa.

3. SETTING UP APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS FOR CO-OPERATION IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

190. Over and above the problems, such as duplication of effort, to which the large number of mechanisms and agencies for co-operation in Africa give rise, they are finding it increasingly difficult to remain viable. This finding also applies to the mechanisms arising out of the MINEDAFs, especially from the standpoint of follow-up.

191. The main tasks assigned to most of the mechanisms set up to date have been to establish dialogue, promote exchanges of information and experiences, and set in motion, at the regional and national levels, joint actions having multiplier effects. However, the context of educational development in Africa has undergone drastic change and the ability of many of its structures to cater for current and future requirements is being called into question.

192. In the case of all these mechanisms, could it be that dialogue is confined to structures operating for their own sake, that exchanges do not exist for want of people with innovative ideas, and that joint action comes to a stop for want of the determination to co-operate? Or is it that they are

quite simply reduced to a common denominator, in that they do not have any resources?

193. It is this context which explains the imperative need for a strengthened partnership on a new and more active basis. The debate on the subject could start out from the following three questions. How can co-operation be broadened to embrace genuine grass-roots participation? How can the existing institutions be strengthened? How can follow-up to MINEDAF be put on a systematic basis?

3.1 Grass-roots participation and the role of non-governmental organizations

194. Giving a fresh start to co-operation in education leads to visualizing, over and above the existing structures, ways and means of giving freer play to individual and collective initiatives and energies and, more specifically, to grass-roots initiative and participation. This is an axiom that has been restored to its rightful place, at the same time as the democratization of political and social life has been gathering pace. Grass-roots participation in education would offer more prospect of catering for basic educational needs through more varied and appropriate approaches and methods.

195. In this connection, the mobilization of the population on behalf of education could, among other things, make use of powerful resources now available through such mass media as radio and television. Their impact would be channelled down to the grass-roots through the network of education institutions and through non-governmental organizations actually taking charge of processing the messages, in order to turn them into tangible learning activities. This type of approach would be integrated into a comprehensive strategy for distance education, whose potential has not yet been adequately tapped.

3.2 Strengthening of institutional capabilities

196. The strengthening of the existing institutional capabilities in favour of co-operation implies that there should be a genuine determination to co-operate in the perspective of collective self-reliance in key areas. Thereafter, it would be necessary to make an uncompromising assessment of the effectiveness of the different institutions. This would make it possible to lay down priorities in the areas to be covered, such as research and teaching evaluation, and the design and production of teaching materials, to mention only two examples connected with the promotion of basic education and literacy.

197. Sound and well-targeted programmes and projects are likely to attract partners other than governments in the regional and international spheres. Indeed, the strengthening in all areas of both institutional capabilities, both nationally and regionally, is a concern that is widely shared by the international community. In that connection, in February 1991 three funding agencies, the World Bank, ADB and UNDP, launched the African Capacity-building Foundation, which is designed to provide much-needed assistance to the African countries, in a bid to strengthen capabilities and institutions in the critical areas of policy analysis and development management.

3.3 Follow-up to the ministerial conferences

198. MINEDAF is one of those fora where concerted political action is taken between decision-makers. Practical co-operation between the Member States would stand to gain from putting the follow-up to the implementation of the conference recommendations on a systematic basis.

199. MINEDAF V recommended to UNESCO that it organize a biennial meeting of experts of Member States to evaluate progress in the implementation of the Harare Declaration. In point of fact, it proved possible to organize only one technical follow-up meeting, in 1985.

200. It should be noted, however, that numerous opportunities exist for engaging in partial follow-up in the specific areas covered by the different existing committees, in other words the three committees set up in pursuance of MINEDAF recommendations: the Advisory Committee on the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa, the Advisory Committee on the Renewal of Science and Technology Training in Africa and the Advisory Committee on Higher Education. Reference was made to these committees in Chapter I.

201. These committees, which were created for the purpose of advising the Director-General, are not in themselves organized to engage in the follow-up to the ministerial conference, which entails making an assessment of the activities undertaken by the Member States. Another, no less important, aspect lies in associating the international community in the follow-up process, since its task is to help the countries of the region to fulfil the goals which they have set themselves. The question is whether follow-up, as a way of implementing conference recommendations, would not warrant being put on a systematic basis.

202. In view of the positive aspects of the experience gained by the existing committees and in a bid to rationalize their workings, UNESCO could offer a framework for follow-up activities in the form of an Advisory Committee on Regional Co-operation in Education in Africa. This committee, which would be an emanation of the conference, would be responsible for ensuring the preparation of future conferences of ministers and for likewise ensuring the follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations adopted on the major educational development issues in Africa, both at the level of the Member States and in all the fora to which the recommendations are addressed.

203. To summarize, it can be seen from Chapter III that the climate of crisis during the 1980s was not conducive to co-operation between the Member States. In the international contribution to education, priority did not go to primary education and literacy.

204. In discussing the guidelines for the 1990s in the perspective of education for all, the Conference may deem it desirable to consider the following questions:

> As far as co-operation between the Member States is concerned, would it not be desirable to direct and strengthen such co-operation through a regional plan of action for Basic Education for All? What could be the main features of such a plan of action, what ways and means could be used to giving effect to it and what contribution could be made by the international community and by UNESCO in particular?
>
> Would it not be desirable to put the follow-up to the implementation of the Conference recommendations on a systematic basis by contemplating the setting-up, with UNESCO's assistance, of an Advisory Committee on Regional Co-operation in Education in Africa?

ANNEX

Breakdown of countries by enrolment rate in 1988

Countries	Primary education net 1988	Primary education gross 1980	Primary education gross 1988	All Levels gross 1988	Illiteracy 1990	Per capita GNP (US $) 1987	Percentage of GNP to education 1987	Percentage of budget to education 1987
GROUP A								
1. Somalia	11	27	15	11	75.9	290	0.3 g	-
2. Mali	17	27	23	12	68	210	3.3	17.3
3. Liberia	21	49	35	21	60.5	450	5.7 a	24.3 a
4. Guinea	23	31	30	16	76	320	3.3 e	13
5. Ethiopia	26	35	36	22	-	130	4.4	9.4
6. Burkina Faso	28	18	34	16	81.8	190	2.9	14.9
7. Niger	32	27	27	15	71.6	260	3.1 a	22.9 a
8. Chad	38	36	50	22	70.2	150	1.9 d	-
9. Guinea Bissau	40	67	53	26	63.4	140	2.8	11.2 e
10. Mauritania	40	37	51	28	66	440	7.7 f	33.2 f
11. Sierra Leone	40	52	53	30	79.3	300	2	17.5 g
12. Sudan	40	50	49	28	72.9	330	4.8 a	9.1 a
13. Burundi	46	29	68	30	50	250	3.1	18.1
14. Senegal	48	48	60	31	61.7	520	3.7	22.8
15. United Republic of Tanzania	48	93	64	32	-	150	3.7	9.9
16. Central African Republic	49	72	67	32	62.2	330	2.9	16.8
GROUP B								
17. Benin	50	66	67	32	76.6	310	5.1 a	36.8 a
18. Uganda	53	50	77	41	51.7	260	4.4	22.5
19. Malawi	55	60	72	40	-	160	3.2	8.8
20. Morocco	55	83	67	40	50.5	610	7.3	25.5
21. Mozambique	55	100	68	26	67.1	170	-	-
22. Nigeria	56	98	66	35	49.3	370	1.5 g	12 g
23. Zaire	57	94	77	42	28.2	150	1.4	8.2
24. Comoros	59	95	80	44	-	370	6.5 g	13.2 g
25. Ghana	59	79	73	45	39.7	390	3.7	26.5
26. Côte d'Ivoire	63	74	70	37	46.2	740	.7 a	22.6 a
27. Gambia	63	51	62	31	72.8	190	4.6 f	8.2
28. Rwanda	64	63	68	37	49.8	300	3.5	22.9
29. Madagascar	66	143	97	44	19.8	210	3.5	-
GROUP C								
30 Kenya	71	106	93	58	31	330	7.1	22.7
31. Togo	73	122	106	52	56.7	290	4.9	19.7
32. Lesotho	74	103	113	63	-	370	4.3	14.8 a
33. Cameroon	80	104	117	61	45.9	970	3.6	21.5
34. Zambia	80	90	95	52	27.2	250	5.5 f	16.3 f
35. Swaziland	82	103	105	67	-	650	5.8	25.9 g
36. Algeria	89	95	96	63	42.6	2,680	10	27.8
37. Egypt	91	78	90	65	51	680	5.9	10.1
38. Cape Verde	92	112	117	53	-	570	2.9	14.2
39. Equatorial Guinea	93	84	108	49	49.8	330	-	-
40. Mauritius	95	108	105	57	-	1,500	3.3 g	12.8 g
41. Tunisia	95	103	115	61	34.7	1,180	6.3 g	14.8 g
42. Botswana	97	97	117	70	26.3	1,050	8.9	16
43. Zimbabwe	100	85	135	74	33.1	580	8.9	13.7 a
44. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	-	-	-	-	36.2	5,460	10.1	20.8
45. Congo	-	-	-	-	43.4	870	4.7 e	20.8
46. Gabon	-	-	-	-	39.3	2,700	5.9	21.7 g

a: 1980 b: 1981 c: 1982 d: 1983 e: 1984 f: 1985 g: 1986